AUDIENCE SURVEY
TRAINING MANUAL AND PROCEDURES FOR LOCAL MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Prepared by the Urban Institute

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PERFORMING ARTS RESEARCH COALITION

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Association of Performing Arts Presenters • American Symphony Orchestra League
Dance/USA • OPERA America • Theatre Communications Group

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

OPERA America, the American Symphony Orchestra League, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Dance/USA, and the Theatre Communications Group, supported by the Urban Institute, are collaborating on a three-year effort to build the data infrastructure to meet the managerial and marketing needs of their member organizations, and the policy-oriented needs of national service organizations. Financial support for this effort is being provided through a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts. This project will enable performing arts organizations to take a major leap forward in their capacity to collect and use data – to improve their operations, and to measure their contribution to the quality of life of audience members and to the communities of which they are a part. The emergence of a strong national partnership between the national service organizations (NSOs) and the creation of local working groups of NSO members in ten cities will provide the backbone for this effort.

At the local level, the project calls for convening working groups of performing arts member organizations beginning first in ten communities (to be phased in over a two year period). Your city (or state, in some cases) will serve as a peer leader in developing a practical, low-cost data collection process, and in developing the capacity for local administration of surveys and collaboration with other member organizations to use such data to strengthen the contribution of the performing arts in your community.

Six goals have been identified for this project – the first three are concrete and attainable during the course of the three year effort (begun in March 2001), the other three, broader and longer term in nature.

1. To revise and supplement the annual membership surveys of the five National Service Organizations, so that a core set of organizational data can be collected across the various disciplines;

2. To develop, test and implement standardized audience, subscriber and community household surveys that will enable NSO member organizations to measure the outcomes of their performing arts programs and activities – and especially those dealing with the value of the performing arts to audiences and communities;

3. To build the long-term capacity of individual NSOs and member organizations to collect and analyze data, and to effectively communicate their findings;

4. To help NSO members use data collected under goals 1 and 2 to improve performing arts outcomes in their communities;

5. To begin to build a sector information system to provide timely and useful information to managers and policy-makers on the condition, activities, outcomes, and environment of the performing arts; and

6. To contribute to the creation of a more collaborative, integrated and identifiable performing arts sector at the local and national levels.

1.2 Project Partners

This project is a unique collaborative effort involving multiple national and local organizations. As this project evolves, additional partners will likely be identified, such as local foundations, corporations, or university partners that might provide financial or other support needed to help sustain project activities beyond the term of the current grant; media; and other stakeholders. Key partners currently engaged in this effort are briefly described below.

- The five National Service Organizations: OPERA America, the American Symphony Orchestra League, the Association of Performing Arts Presenters, Dance/USA, and the Theatre Communications Group. These organizations have come together under this effort as the Performing Arts Research Coalition (PARC), and are led by OPERA America.

- Local Member Working Groups: The five communities selected to participate during the first year were Cincinnati, OH, Denver, CO, Pittsburgh, PA, Seattle, WA and the State of Alaska. In each of these communities a local working group has convened, with members representing the various National Service Organizations. Five additional sites were added in 2002; they are Austin, TX, Boston, MA, Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN, Sarasota, FL and Washington, DC.

- The Pew Charitable Trusts, based in Philadelphia, PA, have provided financial support for this project under a grant to OPERA America. This grant is part of the Trusts' national cultural strategy, *Optimizing America's Cultural Resources.*

- The Urban Institute, an independent, non-profit, non-partisan research organization based in Washington, DC, is providing research support, technical assistance, and other support toward building the capacity of the NSOs and participating localities throughout the project period. Appendix 1 contains a list of Urban Institute staff and contact information.

National Service Organizations have been paired with each participating community to provide feedback and support to this effort. In addition, each community has designated a local member as the lead organization for the working group and community. This organization will facilitate communication between local members and national partners. The table below shows these pairings for both the first year and second year sites.

FIRST YEAR SITES

COMMUNITY	LOCAL LEAD ORGANIZATION	NSO PARTNER
Alaska	Anchorage Opera	OPERA America
Cincinnati	Cincinnati Opera	American Symphony Orchestra League
Denver	Denver City Theatre Company	Theatre Communications Group
Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Cultural Trust	Association of Performing Arts Presenters
Seattle	Pacific Northwest Ballet	Dance/USA

SECOND YEAR SITES

COMMUNITY	LOCAL LEAD ORGANIZATION	NSO PARTNER
Austin	Austin Lyric Opera	OPERA America
Boston	FleetBoston Celebrity Series	American Symphony Orchestra League
Minneapolis/St. Paul	DanceToday	Dance/USA
Sarasota	Asolo Theatre	Theatre Communications Group
Washington, DC	Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts and American University (co-leads)	Association of Performing Arts Presenters

1.3 Core Data Collection Activities

Information for this project will be obtained through the following mechanisms:

(1) Administrative Surveys – which will track data such as the number and types of productions, attendance, ticket prices, and basic organizational financial data. Annual membership surveys for each of the national Service Organizations have been amended to collect such data in a uniform manner to facilitate cross-disciplinary comparisons.

(2) Audience and Subscriber Surveys – which will collect information from occasional and regular arts attendees, respectively, and provide data about the demographics of those audiences, their perceptions about their experiences and how the arts are valued by individuals and their communities, attendance patterns, and barriers to increased attendance. Individual member organizations will participate in the administration of the audience and subscriber surveys.

(3) Household Surveys – which will collect information to help understand the attitudes of those who may not attend the performing arts regularly, and to further understanding why and how individuals can be motivated to become participants. A telephone survey of random households will be undertaken in each participating community by a firm hired for this purpose.

Questionnaires and administration procedures have been developed to accompany each of these data collection activities. This guide focuses on those related to the Audience Survey component.

1.4 Timetable

Following are some key dates to keep in mind.

Spring 2001	Pew Charitable Trusts awards grant to OPERA America.
Summer 2002	Second round communities are selected.
July 2002	Introductory site visits in 5 communities.
September 2002	**Training visits on data collection procedures.**
September 2002	Issue first press release and begin implementing communications strategy.
Oct.-Dec. 2002	**Data collection for audience, subscriber, and household surveys.**
Nov. 8-10, 2002	Second cross-site meeting (Washington, DC).
Winter 2003	Data entry and preliminary analysis.
Spring 2003	**Preliminary report to Pew Charitable Trusts.**

1.5 About This Manual

This manual provides a detailed overview and discussion of procedures member organizations should use to conduct their audience surveys. We hope most members will be able to adopt a standardized approach. However, there will be cases where the proposed model may not apply or may not be feasible to implement, and alternate arrangements will need to be made.

Throughout this manual, we will distinguish between a preferred or recommended approach, and alternative procedures to be utilized when the recommended approach is not workable. Each recommended approach will be clearly noted in bold text. Alternatives will follow. In addition, this manual identifies and describes several local decisions or options that communities or individual members may choose to pursue (e.g., choosing how best to obtain clipboards needed for this effort or use of incentives).

Some of the information provided in this manual may seem quite detailed and basic. There are two reasons for this. First, in order to make sure that we do not introduce bias into the survey, it is very important that survey dissemination and collection is done in a uniform manner by all participating organizations. Specific guidance regarding how to conduct various aspects of survey administration helps ensure this uniformity. Second, the manual is intended to serve as a reference tool, so members can refer to it as needed after the training session to obtain clear and specific guidance for carrying out a particular activity.

2. The Audience Survey

2.1 Overview and Content

The audience survey is the shortest of the three surveys designed for this effort. It is designed to obtain information that will help individual member organizations learn more about their audiences and ultimately use this information to guide member efforts to improve their services and contributions to local communities. At the national level, such information will help national service organizations compare information across members, disciplines, and other populations (e.g., subscribers and households). Several questions on the audience survey are repeated in the subscriber and household surveys to facilitate such comparisons.

The audience survey contains approximately 40 core questions that fit on 2 legal-sized pages. A small number of questions of local interest may be added based on the preferences of working groups in each community. Based on pre-test and follow-up interviews with individuals who completed the survey, we estimate total completion time to be about 3-5 minutes. The first 31 questions can be completed before the start of the performance. Instructions on the questionnaire ask patrons to complete the remaining 9 questions (which evaluate their experience at the performance) either at intermission or at the end of the performance.

The content of the survey can be summarized as follows:

- Information on how tickets were obtained, motivation for attending the performance, frequency of attendance over past 12 months (3 questions);
- Potential barriers to increased participation or attendance (11 questions);
- Assessment/perceptions of value of performing arts to individual and community (9 questions);
- Demographic information (8 questions); and
- Assessment of current performance, venue, etc. (9 questions).

This questionnaire was developed over a period of months, following review of dozens of sample questionnaires provided by many of the organizations participating in this project, and multiple levels of discussion and input from a variety of individuals and groups. A working group with representation from several national service organizations and the Urban Institute worked to design and revise several drafts. The Urban Institute was responsible for conducting a pre-test and making final edits to the instrument. The final version of the core questionnaire (i.e., excluding local questions) is contained in Appendix 2.

2.2 Summary of Core Responsibilities for Members

Each member is expected to assume the following core responsibilities related to administration of the audience survey. Detailed discussion of each of these tasks and related sub-tasks is presented in the remaining sections of this manual.

1. Participate in training session to become familiar with basic procedures or options for administering audience survey.
2. Undertake preparatory steps for audience survey administration (including performance selection, obtaining necessary supplies, training staff, and calculating random assignment of seats appropriate to your venue).
3. Distribute a total of 330 questionnaires across 3 to 6 performances.
4. Collect completed questionnaires from each of these performances and return questionnaires to the local lead organization, who will forward completed questionnaires periodically to the data entry firm (Highland Data Services).
5. Consider various local options (such as use of incentives) and make arrangements accordingly.

Costs associated with reproduction of blank questionnaires are <u>not</u> a local responsibility. Other costs such as clipboards and pens are a local responsibility. In addition, there are a number of local options that, if pursued, may involve additional cost to be assumed by individual members, or perhaps taken from the mini-grant provided to the local working group (e.g., use of incentives, undertaking surveys at additional performances, etc.)

3. Preparatory Steps

This section addresses steps that local working group members should perform or arrange *well in advance* of the dates of survey distribution. Some of these steps are optional, or there are options for the way in which they might be carried out. In these cases, a decision or action on the part of the whole working group is needed, which may require holding a group meeting or otherwise arranging for group input. Other steps will be performed by individual member organizations. Each step is discussed below, beginning with steps that may involve a group decision or action. Core preparatory steps are as follows:

1. Obtain supplies (legal size clipboards and pens).
2. Decide on use of incentives, and arrange for them [local option].
3. Develop and reproduce cover letter [local option].
4. Receive supply of localized questionnaires from The Urban Institute.
5. Select performances for distribution of audience questionnaires.
6. Identify staff/volunteers needed to distribute surveys at those performances.
7. Prepare signage or other written materials.

A detailed description of each of these steps and related considerations follows.

3.1 Obtain Supplies

Other than the questionnaire itself, the primary supplies needed for the audience survey are <u>legal size</u> clipboards and pens. The standard approach is to attach the questionnaire to a legal size clipboard and slip a pen through the clamp on top of the clipboard. (Details on questionnaire distribution are provided in section 4). The use of clipboards has been selected as the primary means for distributing questionnaires, since past experience with clipboards has demonstrated an exceptionally high rate of return.

An adequate supply of clipboards and pens should be obtained well in advance of the date the initial surveys are to be distributed by any member organization. In general, 55-110 questionnaires will be distributed at each performance where survey administration takes place. The number of surveys distributed is based on the number of performances ultimately selected by each organization. You may wish to consider having a few extra clipboards on hand, as some may become lost or to deal with special circumstances that may arise (as noted later in this manual). Since some pens are likely to be lost or taken, it is desirable to buy considerably more than the quantity needed. You can probably take inventory between performances to determine if the supply is low and additional pens need to be obtained or purchased.

Since there are several options for purchasing and distributing these supplies to member organizations, the local working group should decide how this step will be addressed. Because clipboards are the more expensive item to purchase, the following options focus on them.

Options for Purchasing and Distributing Supplies

As a first step, the working group should determine the maximum number of clipboards (and pens) likely to be needed, based on the number of organizations involved, the number of performances and quantity of questionnaires expected to be distributed at each performance. See Section 3.5 and Section 4 for additional guidance.

Option 1 – Each organization purchases its own supply of clipboards and pens.

This has the advantage of simplicity, but drawbacks include duplication of effort across organizations and likely slightly higher costs than if a bulk purchase was made.

Option 2 – The working group arranges to purchase clipboards and pens in bulk, and distribute the needed amount to each member.

Thus, if there were 10 member organizations who decided to purchase 110 clipboards each, there would be a bulk purchase of 1,100 clipboards. Alternatively, if all 10 members agreed to distribute 55 questionnaires at each of six performances, only 550 clipboards would be needed. This option will save time for the individual members, and may cost less. However, it will involve working out some logistical steps to ensure that supplies are delivered to, or picked up by, each member in advance of planned distribution.

Option 3 – The working group arranges purchase of clipboards and pens in bulk, and to <u>share</u> them among member organizations.

For example, rather than purchasing 1,100 clipboards, the working group might purchase 440, which would enable four member organizations to have 110 clipboards (or eight members to have 55 clipboards, and so on), each at the same time. Like Option 2, this saves time for the individual members, but involves less cost overall due to need to purchase fewer clipboards. However, it involves more planning and sharing of information about when surveys will be administered by each member, plus logistics of getting the clipboards to the appropriate member at the right time. That is, clipboards would need to be picked up by (or delivered to) respective member organizations in time for their planned survey administration.

Regardless of the option selected, purchase of supplies should be done well in advance of planned survey administration. The only other supplies needed are empty boxes (or similar containers) to place near exits or other appropriate locations for audience members to leave their completed surveys. Organizations are likely to have a sufficient number of boxes on hand without having to purchase them for this purpose (or the boxes in which the clipboards were originally packed may be used for this purpose).

3.2 Use of Incentives [Local Option]

Incentives are frequently used to encourage higher response rates to surveys of various kinds. Use of incentives for the audience survey is a local option. The working group can decide that all members will use incentives, or it can decide that each member should make that decision independently. Incentives may take many forms. Examples of incentives that appear reasonable for this particular survey are shown in Exhibit 3-2.

Exhibit 3-2
Examples of Incentives

- An attractive pen or pencil to use to fill in the questionnaire and to keep afterward (perhaps with name of member organization on it).
- A $1 bill (perhaps in an envelope) attached to the clipboard/questionnaire.
- A voucher or coupon (attached to the clipboard) to be turned in for something linked to the performance or member organization (e.g., a free beverage or snack at the refreshment stand; a discount (such as 10%) on a pair of tickets to an upcoming performance); a free ticket or pair of tickets to an upcoming performance.
- An opportunity to win a prize, such as a gift certificate to a local store; dinner for two at a restaurant; a pair of tickets to an upcoming performance; a subscription to next season; a spa or health club certificate; a night or weekend at a local hotel or B&B, etc. A form for contact information (name, address, phone number) would be attached to the clipboard/questionnaire, and a drawing would be held to select one or more prize winners.

If the working group decides that all members will use an incentive, it should also determine whether they will all offer the <u>same</u> incentive, and whether the group as a whole will pay for, or seek donations of, incentives. Incentives that might be donated, for example, include dinner for two at a local restaurant(s), gift certificates at local stores or services, etc. Other things to consider include whether incentives involving a drawing for a prize are to be offered <u>each time</u> the survey is administered by a given member, or <u>once</u> for each organization; or <u>once</u> for the community as a whole. The size and cost of the prize would influence that decision.

If the decision is made that each member will select its own incentives, the group may want to consider some form of information sharing or coordination to avoid having multiple members soliciting the same local restaurants or stores for similar donations. This would not be a concern for such incentives as tickets to a performance by that organization, refreshment stand coupon, and so forth.

If incentives are used, some mechanism will be needed to inform potential respondents about them – such as a coupon or voucher to turn in at the refreshment stand or box office, or a raffle form to be entered in drawings. The working group or member organization will be responsible for designing and duplicating such forms, depending on whether use of incentives is handled in a centralized or decentralized way.

3.3 Develop and Reproduce Cover Letter [Local Option]

The audience survey questionnaire includes a request to complete the questionnaire and basic instructions at the top of the form, and does not require a cover letter or note.

We do not recommend addition of a cover letter, since attaching it to the clipboard will partially obscure the questionnaire, and reading it takes time that might otherwise be used to complete the questionnaire. In addition, discarded cover letters will likely create additional litter for member organizations to clean up after performances.

Despite these drawbacks, some local working groups have expressed interest in attaching a note or letter to the clipboard, either for all members, or as an option for each member. Even if the working group decides that cover letters are optional for individual members, it may be desirable for the group to agree on the basic text, or at least the topics to address, so that a common message is transmitted to the public. Some of these topics might include:

- Purpose of questionnaire/survey
- Local participation is part of national effort
- How the information will be used
- Why this is important
- Incentive for completion of questionnaire (if any)

If a cover letter is ultimately used, it will be up to the local working group or individual member (if it is decided to treat this as a member option) to develop the text of the letter and incur the costs of reproduction. If a coupon, voucher, or raffle for incentives is used, it is preferable to print that as a tear-off segment on the bottom of the cover letter, rather than having multiple pages attached to the clipboard.

3.4 Receive Questionnaires

The Urban Institute will provide a supply of approximately 350 audience questionnaires individualized with the names of the member organizations and community name. These will be batched with a supply of Performance Logs, and sent to the lead organization for distribution to individual members. The lead organization will coordinate with the working group to determine an appropriate strategy for getting the surveys to each participating member organization. For example, once materials are received by the lead organization, local members might be informed and make arrangements to pick up their questionnaires from the lead organization. Or a local working group meeting might be convened for such a purpose, or as part of a meeting to address other local business.

The Urban Institute will work with each community to supply these questionnaires as soon as possible. In some cases, personalized questionnaires may be provided to members during the training sessions. In general, we estimate that questionnaires can be printed and mailed within a week of coming to agreement on inclusion of local questions.

> When the questionnaires are received by individual member organizations, they should be checked immediately to be sure that the organization and community names are printed correctly. Each member should check that it receives the questionnaires with its name upon receipt of the forms (well in advance of the projected distribution date).

3.5 Select Performances at Which Questionnaires Will be Distributed

Recommended Approach: 3 to 6 Different Performances

Each member organization is expected to distribute the audience questionnaire at three to six performances between October and December, 2002. Member organizations should select performances for survey administration to capture variations in audiences and/or types of performance. The goal for each organization is to select the appropriate number and variety of performances that will be most representative of your overall audience.

Examples of variation you may wish to capture include:

- Performance variety: drama, musical and comedy; classical and"pops;" popular favorites/standards and less familiar or "new" works; family-oriented productions.

- Days and times of performance: Weekday evening, weekend evening, weekend matinee.

- Venue: (where applicable) Usual venue versus outdoor production or other special location.

As noted earlier, the goal is to distribute 330 questionnaires divided across 3 to 6 performances. As the number of performances selected increases, the number of questionnaires distributed at a single performance will decrease.

Special Cases or Exceptions

(1) Some member organizations may not be able to capture all desired types of variation during the specified data collection period (for example, some may only mount one production during that time period, or may mount two productions of a similar nature, e.g., two dramatic plays, or only classical concerts). Member organizations should seek variety of whatever kind they can reasonably obtain in the specified time period.

(2) There may be a small number of cases where a member organization does not have any productions during the survey administration period (for example, an organization that only provides a summer series). These organizations should administer the survey during their season, and submit the completed questionnaires for inclusion in the next round of data analysis and reporting. Please advise Urban Institute of such special circumstances as soon as possible.

(3) Some members may wish to capture more variation than six (6) performances, by selecting additional performances, or obtain feedback from more than 300 or so audience members. Unfortunately, resources are not available at this time to support costs associated with an expanded effort. However, if this is a major concern for a particular member organization, we are willing to discuss sharing costs for expanded data collection.

(4) Larger venues may wish to distribute all 330 surveys across one or two performances in order to assure representation from all ticket price levels.

3.6 Identify Staff or Volunteers to Distribute Questionnaires at Selected Performances

Each member organization is responsible for identifying and mobilizing staff or volunteers to assist with distribution and collection of questionnaires at the selected performances. Staff and/or volunteers are needed for two key functions:

1. **Setting up the clipboards with questionnaires and pens.**

2. **Distributing clipboards on selected seats prior to the selected performances (Option A), or handing clipboards to patrons as they enter the venue (Option B).**

Section 4 provides a detailed discussion of both options for distributing clipboards.

The remainder of this sub-section focuses on organizational steps associated with setting up clipboards and the on-seat distribution method, which we believe will (in many cases) be easier to administer. Special exceptions and considerations are noted in Section 4.

Each member organization will first have to determine whether one group of staff/volunteers will perform both of these functions. Setting up clipboards can be done hours or days in advance of the performance (if there is a place to store them after they are set up), so this might be done by staff (or volunteers) who are normally present at the organization. However, if there is lack of space to keep the prepared clipboards, additional time and/or people may be needed prior to the performance to set up clipboards and distribute them. Member organizations also need to decide whether to ask the same staff or volunteers to perform these functions for all performances selected for survey distribution, or whether some different individuals may be needed for different performances. The former scenario is most desirable, since it reduces time needed for training.

Note that 55-110 or more clipboards will take up a lot of space. Make sure you have enough volunteers to prepare, carry, distribute clipboards, and space to store them between performances. It may take additional time to set up and distribute.

In general, two or three people should be able to distribute 110 clipboards on seats in an empty venue in approximately 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the size and layout of the venue. Many member organizations should be able to accomplish this with the usual number of staff on hand before a performance, although staff may need to come earlier than usual on the selected dates to distribute clipboards. Member organizations should consider whether there are constraints on staff (e.g., union regulations, other critical tasks to perform) that would prevent some or all of them from helping distribute the questionnaires. If so, members should identify sources of volunteers for this function. Other working group members may be able to provide assistance, or make recommendations for sources of volunteers

Once the member organization identifies the staff or potential volunteers for these tasks, a staff member should contact them to briefly explain the overall survey effort, the tasks they are needed to perform, the dates and times at which their assistance is needed, and how much of their time is needed at each of the dates. In calculating how much time is needed, be sure to allow some time to provide instructions on how to perform these tasks, particularly how to count out the random selection of seats. In general, it is best to train the staff or volunteers immediately before they begin performing their tasks, rather than days in advance. It may be wise to recruit a few more staff or volunteers than seems necessary, to serve as "back up" in case there are some "no shows."

3.7 Prepare Signage and Other Written Materials

It is desirable to prepare some signs (computer generated or hand-printed) to identify collection points (boxes, other containers, or table tops) for completed questionnaires. Sheets of paper printed with a phrase such as "Deposit completed survey forms here" (or something similar) can be taped to the boxes or posted on walls at collection points.

Some member organizations might want to post a sign in the lobby (or other appropriate location) announcing that a survey is being conducted at that performance, and asking that those who find a questionnaire on their seats complete it and return it before leaving.

If there will be a pre-curtain announcement about the survey (discussed in section 5), that should be prepared and written in advance for the announcer to refer to. As discussed earlier, if a cover letter or a form related to incentives (voucher, coupon or raffle form) is being used, those should also be prepared in advance.

4. Distributing the Audience Questionnaire

The recommended distribution system is to place questionnaires on clipboards; and to distribute clipboards to a systematic and random sample of the audience for that performance. The overall goal is to obtain 300 completed questionnaires across three to six performances by each organization, by distributing a minimum of 55 questionnaires at six performances, and a maximum of 110 questionnaires at three performances.

Your organization should adopt one of the following two options.

Option A: Place clipboards on systematically selected seats prior to each performance.

Option B: Hand clipboards to systematically selected audience members as they enter the venue.

Each member should carefully consider each of these options and determine which will better suit their individual needs, based on the detailed considerations and tradeoffs discussed below. We will attempt to keep track of individual choices through the use of a short performance log to be completed and returned to the Urban Institute following each performance.

4.1 Calculate the Systematic and Random Sample for Questionnaire Distribution

This step can be performed in advance of clipboard distribution, or as a preparatory step.

Option A: On-Seat Distribution Method:

The calculation procedure described below assumes that you will have a relatively full house at the performance[1] and maximizes the potential for questionnaires to be completed by a *random, representative sample* of audience members.

To calculate the interval between seats on which clipboards will be placed, divide the number of seats in the venue by the number of questionnaires to be distributed at each performance (between 55 and 110, unless your venue has less than 110 seats.) If 110 clipboards are to be distributed at each of three performances, and the venue has 650

[1] The higher the number of vacant seats at a performance, the greater potential to distribute questionnaires to empty seats. Ideally, in such situations you would account for these empty seats by adjusting (increasing) the overall number of questionnaires distributed. If you expect a large number of empty seats at one of the performances selected for the audience survey, and these seats are scattered throughout the theatre (rather than concentrated in a particular section such as a balcony), you may wish to consider handing out clipboards to patrons as they enter the auditorium (Option B).

seats, 650 divided by 110 = 5.9. In this example, the number of seats does not divide evenly, so round to the next whole number that results in distribution of desired number of clipboards. In this case, a clipboard should be placed on *every sixth seat.* Hint: always double-check your calculation by dividing the total number of seats (650) by the *nth* seat number calculated (six) to be sure it comes out at, or close to 110 (650 divided by 6 = 108.3 seats or 109).

<u>Option B</u>: In-Person Distribution of Clipboards

Begin by estimating attendance for the performance, and use this figure, instead of the number of seats in the venue, as the numerator in your computation. The denominator will still be the number of questionnaires to be distributed at the performance. Instead of placing clipboards on every *nth* seat, they will be handed to every *nth* audience member as they enter the venue. In this case, instead of dividing the number of seats in the venue by the number of questionnaires to be distributed, <u>divide the number of tickets sold (or the expected audience size)</u> by the number of questionnaires to be distributed.

If this scenario is used, the member organization will need to calculate how many staff or volunteers would be needed to provide two or three at <u>each</u> entry to the venue. For very large venues with multiple entrances, this scenario may be unworkable.

Exhibit 4-1 provides some additional guidance regarding each of these options.

The underlying principle of a systematic random sample is to ensure the each individual has an equal chance of being chosen to complete a questionnaire. Any violation of this basic principle, such as through a more haphazard approach to survey distribution, will undermine confidence in the resulting data.

For example, handing a survey to the first 100 people who enter a venue, or giving the survey only to those people who really want to fill it out, does not result in a sample that represents your overall audience.

Exhibit 4-1
Frequently asked Questions about Random Distribution

Q. What if the venue has less than 110 seats?

A. Distribute as many clipboards as you can, but to no more than every second seat in the venue. We want to avoid distributing two questionnaires to couples or within a family.

Q. What if seats in specific and identifiable sections are expected to be empty?

A. Count the number of seats in these sections and subtract from the total number of seats in the venue. Calculate your random distribution assignment based on the revised (lower) number, and distribute clipboards only to the sections or seating areas you expect to be occupied. Avoid distributing clipboards to whole sections you expect will be mostly empty during a particular performance.

Q. What if many seats are expected to be empty at the selected performance(s)?

A. If you cannot specifically identify the seats that will be empty ahead of time, and expect that the empty seats will be scattered throughout the venue, you may wish to consider handing out clipboards to randomly selected patrons as detailed in Option B.

Q. What if an audience member who didn't receive a questionnaire asks for one?

A. There are two ways to handle this. The simple option is to apologize and explain that surveys were distributed to specific people, and they simply were not chosen. An alternative approach, that involves more is to have a small supply of questionnaires that are discretely marked in some way to give out on request. These "marked" questionnaires must be removed from the set of completed questionnaires before they are returned for analysis. Note that this option may involves having some extra clipboards on hand as well.

4.2 Prepare for Questionnaire Distribution

The following are preliminary steps to take prior to actual distribution of questionnaires. Some of these may need to be done a few days in advance of the date of distribution (or even earlier). Other steps, such as training, may be done right before distribution begins.

1. Arrange to have a staff member trained in the survey administration procedures present to train the staff and volunteers, supervise them, answer questions or deal with any unexpected circumstances that may arise.

2. Make arrangements so that staff or volunteers are able to enter the venue at the selected time. Allow sufficient time for training and performing the respective tasks (setting up clipboards; random distribution of clipboards), and to complete distribution of clipboards before the audience is admitted.

3. Instruct staff and volunteers on how to perform the respective tasks (following the task descriptions below)

4. Gather and place signs on boxes (or other containers) in which audience members can place completed surveys as they leave. This can be done prior to the selected dates, or as one of the tasks volunteers or staff perform on that day.

5. Inform ushers on hand for the performance that a survey will be taking place that day or evening. Equip them with basic information, such as where clipboards and completed surveys can be returned, and that instructions are contained on the survey instrument about how and when to complete.

4.3 Set up Clipboards

The questionnaire should be clamped to the clipboard, with the first page (with the Audience Survey heading) visible, and a pen should be placed horizontally in the space on the clamp of the clipboard. If there is an additional attachment (such as a cover letter, or an incentive coupon or voucher), that should be placed on top of the questionnaire.

Setting up clipboards can be done well in advance of the performance at which they will be distributed, if they can be stored in such a way that the pens do not fall out of the clamps. Storing them vertically in boxes should be sufficient to keep pens in place.

4.4 Distribute Clipboards

Calculate the interval between seats on which clipboards will be placed, or individuals to whom you will hand clipboards prior to training volunteers or staff in how to distribute the clipboards, as detailed in Section 4.1.

<u>Option A</u>: On-Seat Distribution Method

This illustration assumes that a clipboard is to be placed on every fourth seat. The person placing clipboards should count the starting seat as #1, and should place a clipboard on that seat, and then on seat #5, then on seat #9, and the fourth seat after that, and so on. In this example, there will be three seats *without* clipboards between every seat that has a clipboard.

Start distributing clipboards at the front of the venue (either the far left or far right), complete that row, and work back from that. If there are two or three sections separated by aisles, someone can be assigned to distribute clipboards within each section, moving back to the next row when they reach the aisle (in effect, counting every nth seat moving front to back within the section). Similarly, someone can be assigned to distribute clipboards in the balcony (or balconies), without waiting until the count of seats on the first level is completed. If there are seats on two or more sides of the stage, counting can begin at each of section of seats.

A sample illustration is included on the following page. In this example, there are 425 seats in the auditorium, and clipboards are distributed across rows throughout the theatre (rather than within each section.) 107 clipboards will be needed to distribute to every fourth chair throughout the entire venue, since 425 divided by four is 106.25. (Additional sample layouts for discussion purposes are included in an appendix.)

Exhibit 4-3
Tips on Placement of Clipboards

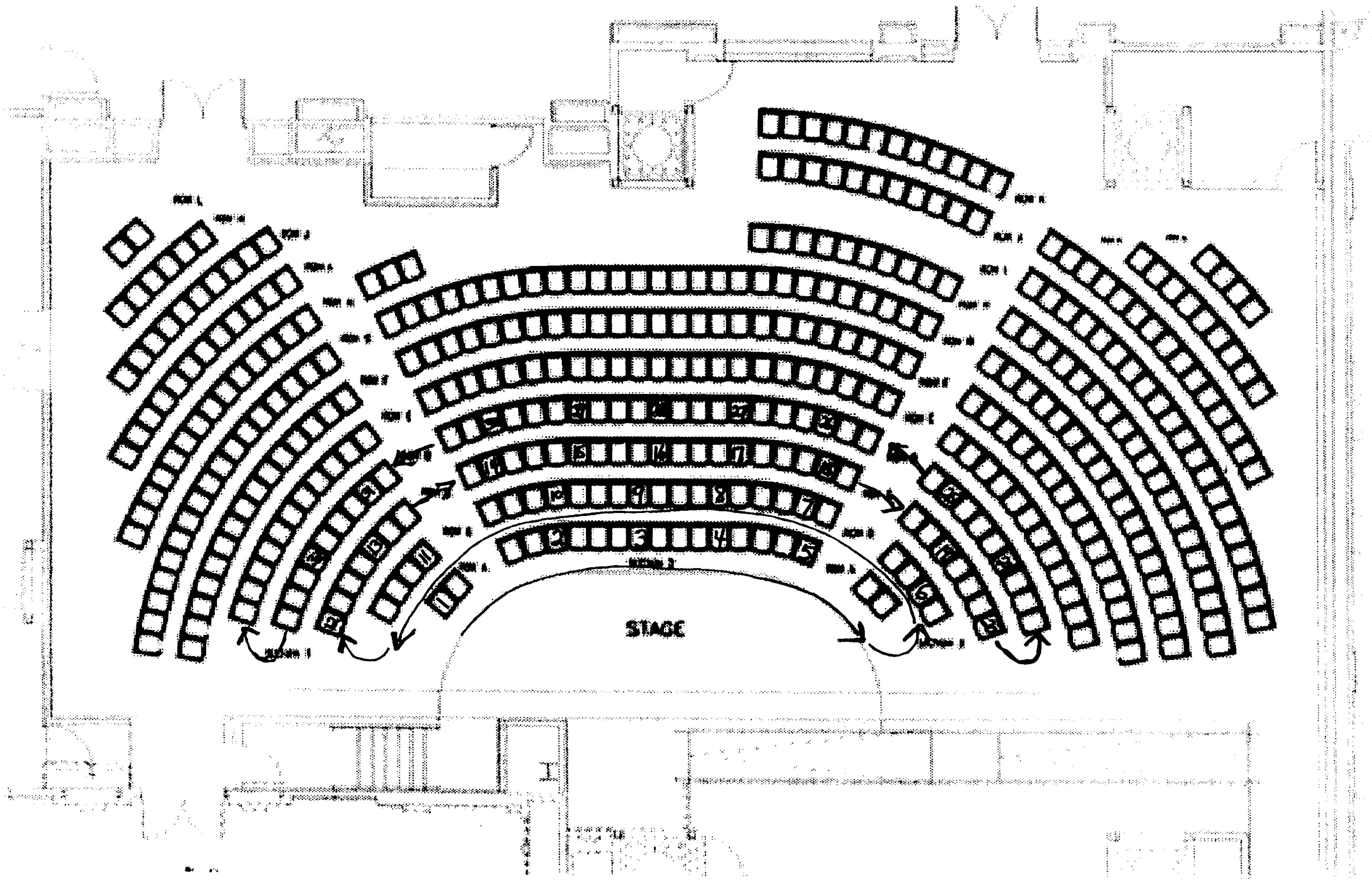
The goal is to place clipboards on selected seats so they are visible, but to avoid creating a safety hazard. Avoid placing clipboards on the arms of chairs since this may confuse the counting procedures or lead to confusion among patrons asked to complete the survey.

If seats are folded, try balancing the clipboard vertically, with one end on the chair seat and the top resting on the seat back. If that does not work, slide the clipboard between the closed seat and the seat back, which should leave the top visible. This prevents unfolding of the seat until the clipboard is pulled out, making the patron aware of the clipboard. Although another option is to place the clipboard on the floor under the seat, this is not recommended since someone might slip on the clipboard and fall.

If seats are not folded, simply place the clipboard on the seat. If there are marked benches or bleacher-style seats, align the clipboards as closely as possible to the seat numbers.

SAMPLE RANDOM DISTRIBUTION TO EVERY FOURTH SEAT.

425 Seats ÷ 110 = 3.86



Option B: In-Person Distribution of Clipboards

To distribute clipboards to individuals as they enter the venue, two or three people will be needed at each entry point to count off every *nth* audience member and hand him/her a clipboard. Since there is personal interaction involved in this scenario, it will most likely be necessary to provide a brief explanation that a survey is being conducted, and to request completion of the questionnaire. Selected audience members are likely to ask a question or two, which will interrupt counting. To avoid excessive bottlenecking, and to be sure that every *nth* person receives a clipboard, when the first staff member/volunteer begins talking to the *nth* patron, the second staff member/volunteer at that entry point should pick up the count of audience members entering behind that person, and hand a clipboard to the next *nth* person. Hopefully the first staff member or volunteer will be free at that point, and can begin the count for the next *nth* patron after that, and so forth.

As noted earlier, Option B will likely involve a larger number of volunteers, and requires that each entrance to the venue be staffed by volunteers able to distribute clipboards. Other simple calculations will be required, such as to divide the number of questionnaires to be distributed among the various entry points (to determine how many clipboards should be placed at each point of entry). Remember that every person who enters the performance needs to have an equal chance of being selected for participation.

5. Announcing the Survey

<u>Recommended Approach: Pre-Curtain Announcement</u>

Our pre-test experience indicates that a pre-curtain announcement about the survey that encourages audience members to complete the questionnaire on their seat helps achieve a good response rate. The recommended approach is a brief, scripted pre-curtain announcement, as illustrated in the following sample text.

<u>Sample Script for Pre-Curtain Announcement</u>

Some patrons may have found a clipboard at their seat with an audience survey attached. Please take a few minutes to fill this out and return the clipboard with your completed survey to one of the boxes located near the exit as you leave tonight.

Other points you may wish to consider including (if time permits):

- Explain why this information is important to your organization.
- Explain that your community/organization is participating in a national effort.
- Describe any incentives that might be offered.

Member organizations might choose to "announce" the survey in ways <u>in addition to</u> the pre-curtain announcement. These would be considered part of the recommended approach. For example, they might post a sign in the lobby (or at entry points) indicating that a survey is being conducted that evening. Members may also wish to make a reminder announcement at intermission, if appropriate.

The bottom line is that audiences should be made aware of the survey somehow.

Alternative Approach – No Announcement

Some organizations may not be able to, or may not wish to make a pre-curtain announcement. We recommend using some mechanism to inform the audience about the survey, such as an intermission announcement, or posting a sign in the lobby (or at entry points). As noted in Section 6, you will be asked to document whether or not an announcement was made, using a form developed for this effort.

6. Collecting Completed Questionnaires

Recommended Approach

Clipboards with the completed questionnaire attached should be turned in at intermission or after the performance. Boxes (or other containers) should be placed near exits or at other appropriate locations where audience members can drop off their clipboards. Staff or volunteers can set out boxes before the audience arrives, or after their arrival but prior to intermission. It will be useful to mark the boxes, or place signs above the collection points, to help audience members locate them.

Some performances do not have intermissions. In these cases, audience members can return the questionnaire as they leave the venue. The questionnaire is designed so that most questions can be answered before seeing the performance. Only a few questions should be answered at intermission or after the performance, and these require very little time to answer. Note that ideally, this final set of questions should be completed at the end of the performance to give the respondent the chance to provide the most accurate assessment of the performance experience.

7. Handling Completed Questionnaires

Recommended Approach

Member organizations need to "batch" completed questionnaires from each performance and return them to their local lead organization within five (5) days of the date of administration. The local lead will arrange to have member surveys sent directly to the Highland Data Service[2] (in bulk) two to three times during the data collection period (October through December, 2002).

If you wish to keep copies of the completed questionnaires for your own use, please make such copies before sending them to the local lead. These copy costs are a local member responsibility. Urban Institute will develop a procedure for sharing data with individual organizations, after data entry and data cleaning activities have taken place. (Refer to Section 8 for more detail.)

Key steps for returning completed questionnaires are:

1. Batch completed questionnaires from a given performance together by placing them in a large envelope. On the outside of the envelope note member organization name, date and time of performance.

2. Complete a Performance Log following each performance to provide information about the performance at which those questionnaires were distributed (see discussion and example below.)

3. Include form in the envelope with the completed surveys for that performance.

4. Send questionnaires and forms to the local lead within five days of the performance.

DO NOT MIX COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES FROM DIFFERENT PERFORMANCES. You can return questionnaires from multiple performances that occur within the five day time frame as long as they are in separate envelopes.

[2] To facilitate data entry and timely analysis, the Urban Institute will work out a schedule with local lead organizations in each community to send completed questionnaires.

A sample Performance Log to be completed following each performance at which the audience survey was conducted is shown on the following page. It includes basic identifying information about your organization, the performance, details about the procedures used. It includes space for you to provide additional observations to improve the process in the future or to comment about any problems you encountered. This information is very important to help us learn about your experience and to make necessary adjustments to improve future efforts.

AUDIENCE SURVEY PERFORMANCE LOG

Please complete a new survey log for each performance you survey. Place the completed log and corresponding surveys into an envelope, write your organization's name and the date and time of the performance on the envelope, and forward the envelope to your local lead organization within five days of the performance.

Take care to keep surveys collected at different performances separate, and use a separate envelope for each set of completed surveys.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Organization Name:			
Performance Venue:			
City:			
Name of Person Overseeing Survey:		**Phone Number:**	

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Name of Production:			
Type of Performance: (e.g., Ballet)			
Performance Date:	**___ / ___ / 2002**	Performance Starting Time:	**___:___ a.m./p.m.**

SURVEY DETAILS

Number of questionnaires distributed at this performance:		**Number of questionnaires completed at this performance:**	
Number of seats in venue (only include those areas where the survey was distributed):		**Estimated Attendance:**	

Please indicate which of the following apply to this performance (check all that apply):

	There was a pre-curtain announcement
	The survey was publicized through sign(s) in the lobby
	Incentives were used to encourage patrons to complete the survey
	Questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected seats in the venue/auditorium.
	Questionnaires were handed to patrons as they entered.
	This performance had one or more intermissions.

Please describe any special circumstances or particular problems you encountered:

____

____

____

8. Next Steps

8.1 Within Two Weeks of Site Visit Training

Immediate steps to be pursued by member organizations by themselves, or possibly in coordination with the full working group include the following:

- Obtain supplies.
- Select performances.
- Identify volunteers or staff.
- Provide feedback on how accurately your organization is represented in current draft of audience survey.

These activities should ideally take place within the next couple of weeks to permit actual administration of the audience survey to begin as soon as possible. Please review this manual for a description of other optional preparatory tasks, such as use of incentives or cover letters to accompany the audience survey.

8.2 Data Entry and Analysis

Based on the current timeline, most **audience survey data collection activities should be complete by the end of December 2002**. The Highland Data Services will oversee data entry and tasks. A final cut-off date in early January for receipt of questionnaires will be established and communicated to member organizations in the near future. **Questionnaires received after this cut-off date may not be included in this round of analysis.**

Individual databases will be made available to each member organization for local use, once data entry and basic cleaning activities are complete. Preliminary findings will be shared and reviewed during spring of 2003.